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Go

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About this capture

1 capture

27 Apr 1997



Pain: The Fifth Vital Sign

Vital Signs are taken seriously. If pain were assessed with the same zeal as other vital signs are, it would have a much better chance of being treated properly. We need to train doctors and nurses to treat pain as a vital sign. Quality care means that pain is measured and treated.

James Campbell, MD
Presidential Address
American Pain Society
Los Angeles, CA
November 11, 1995

FIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE PAIN ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT

- ✓ Consider **pain the fifth vital sign** and assess patients for pain every time you check for pulse, blood pressure, core temperature, and respiration.
- ✓ Urge your colleagues to take their patients' complaints of pain seriously. Remind them not to put patients in the position of asking for a favor when they want pain relief.
- ✓ Inform patients that they deserve to have their pain evaluated and treated.
- ✓ Work to implement the APS [Quality Improvement Guidelines for the Treatment of Acute Pain and Cancer Pain](#) in your own practice setting. (JAMA, 274, 1874-1880)
- ✓ Wear your [Fifth Vital Sign button](#) and make opportunities to explain the importance of pain evaluation and treatment to other healthcare professionals and to the public.

APS
Home
Page

[BACK →](#) [Advocacy and Initiatives](#)

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